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## IN DISTRESSFUL SPAIN.

HE who has lately made Spain his play-ground cannot fail to have been sadly impressed, and to have reluctantly added to the list of the distressful countries of the world a land which yields to none in its wealth of romantic and historical associations, or in its own natural fertility and capabilities. Everybody's first visit to Spain is made in the spirit of realising a life-long dream. The most ordinarily impressionable nature becomes imprinted in childhood and youth with the association of Spain with sunshine, and song, and dance; with stately buildings and grand scenery, so that the shock is doubly severe when realisation presents the stately buildings and the sunshine, but little else. Perhaps the most striking impression, and that which disappoints the most, is the sadness of the Spanish people. We are taught to accept a stately gravity of demeanour as the proper characteristic of the Spanish grandee, but under such bright skies and in such a nature-blessed land one looks for cheerfulness amongst the people. But, making due allowance for the two causes which at the present moment are unnaturally depressing the heart of Spain—the burden of the miserable and seemingly endless war in Cuba, and the almost total ruin of every harvest but that of the vineyard by an unprecedented drought, we are assured that under the most hopeful circumstances the Spaniard is never thoroughly cheerful, and we had ample opportunities of observing that he takes his pleasure quite as sadly as the traditional Englishman.

If the unusual melancholy of the Spaniard of 1896 was the mere sternness of activity and energy in the work of remedy and reform, it might claim our respect; but as it accompanies listlessness, inertness, and hopelessness, it moves that pity which is closely allied to contempt. No sadder example does the world offer of the fallaciousness of trading upon tradition and faded prestige than does Spain offer at the

present day. The Spaniard, be he grandee or peasant, is the proudest of men. There are scores of gentlemen bearing names renowned in the most glorious periods of Spanish history who are content to starve themselves in the attics of their ancestral homes rather than put their hands to work of any kind. How they live is a problem, but they appear regularly upon sunny afternoons on the places of fashionable resort, correctly attired to all outward appearance, although a near inspection reveals frayed linen, and a general buttoning up which suggests a mask for deficiencies beneath, comporting themselves with the most finished air of independent well-to-do-ness.

In Burgos, not many weeks back, the writer, prowling about the fine old mansions which were once the homes of the local nobility, but are now sadly fallen from their high estate, and are let out to cheap lodgers and petty tradesmen, was attracted by a peculiarly quaint and fine knocker on the majestic door, surmounted by a many-quartered coat of arms. Upon inquiry about the house, and if it was possible to see over it, the answer was that permission could only be obtained from the Count H—, naming one of the most historical families in Spain, who lived on the 'fourth floor back.' Respect, however, for the poor gentleman's feelings forbade me from passing through the majestic hall, now a mule stable, and up the stately, but shattered marble staircase to the regions above; and I was told that not only Burgos, but all the once famous old Spanish towns such as Toledo, Cordoba, Segovia, Valladolid, and Salamanca, were full of these fallen representatives of ancient families. The man of the people possesses equal pride, and treats you, if not with the condescension of a superior, with the ease of an equal; sells you a box of matches with the air of conferring a favour, and is to be addressed as '*Señor*.'

*Pan y Toros!* 'Bread and Bullfights.'

These three little words, scribbled upon many a Spanish wall, are full of significance at

the present time, and are a veritable sermon upon the condition, or rather upon the disposition of a large section of the people; for by them we are reminded of the desperate, heedless cry of the Roman people, when the Empire was in its last throes, for *Panis et Circenses*! Let it not be understood that one who writes simply from the point of view of a traveller would for a moment hint that the present condition of Spain is at all to be compared for hopelessness and helplessness with that of Rome, when the cry ran for Bread and the Games; yet, when a people, ground almost beyond endurance by taxation, paralysed by the incessant drain of a costly and inglorious war, and with little hope of help, at any rate for the present year, from a kindly Nature which has rarely refused help before, speaks words like these—and wall-scribblings are often the voice of the people—one secret of Spain's present unenviable condition is revealed.

'Bread and the Bulls!' With an empty exchequer, with a country-side burned to dust, despite Image processions and prayers for rain, with poverty and distress blatant on every side, the Sunday Bull Ring is always crowded. Starvation for to-day is preferable to being debarred from the two hours' luxury of a seat, even in the *Sol*—in the fierce glare of the afternoon sun—never mind after to-morrow! Never mind the importunate creditor, the landlord, and the tax-collector! Never mind the children crying round the empty larder! Are not Guerita and Reverte the *espadas* of to-morrow's *Corrida*; and are they not to despatch half a dozen of the finest bulls of the most famous Andalusian *ganaderos*.

All over Spain, except at such centres of commerce as Barcelona, Bilbao, Malaga, and Cadiz, we see but too clearly the results of this national apathy and indifference to the future.

Nowhere in the world are there more magnificent historical monuments than in Spain. Nowhere in the world are magnificent historical monuments in such a condition of neglect and filth. Even the Alhambra at Granada is far from being kept as it should be; and if we excuse the tardiness in the progress of needful restoration and repair on the plea that a nation, sore-pressed to find money to pay its army, can hardly be expected to spare much for the execution of sentimental work, there is no reason why the halls, and chambers, and gardens of the most fascinating group of buildings in the world should not be kept ordinarily clean, especially when we remember that the city of Granada, annually visited by thousands of money-spending strangers, must be almost well-to-do, if not rich.

Cathedrals such as those at Toledo and Burgos, and the glorious mosque at Cordoba, are in the filthiest and most neglected condition. The dust of long years lies unstirred upon their matchless ironwork and their wood-carving; the marble pavements are discoloured with dirt; repairs seem to be never dreamed of; if a cornice or an ornament shows signs of decay, it remains until it falls, and lies when it falls; grass and weeds grow apace between the stones of the delightful old Moorish *patios* or courts, scaffoldings tottering from long existence, and

crumbling walls remain to vex the eye and mar the scene; and yet—there are gold and silver, and a wealth of gorgeous vestments in the sacristies of which the value is incalculable.

It is when one sees Spain at such a time as the present, when the national vices of apathy and dilatoriness are rich in their most hurtful fruits, that the genius of the Moors stands forth in mighty pre-eminence. The fanatic hatred of the Christian for the Moslem accounts fairly enough for wholesale destruction or obliteration by alteration of such Moorish buildings as mosques and palaces, or even of private houses; but it cannot be adduced as a satisfactory reason for the wholesale neglect by Spaniards of the wonderful works of public utility with which the Moor covered the land. Without going so far as to say that the terrible results of the drought of this year might have been staved off altogether, it is quite certain that they might have been very appreciably minimised if Spain had only troubled, in times past and present, to keep in repair the irrigating system which the Moors left behind them. At any rate, it is historically true that very many of those vast, desolate, featureless, melancholy tracts of country, through which the Spanish trains creep on their weary way during long days and nights, were, under the Moorish rule, olive-gardens, vineyards, and cornfields. Remains of these irrigating works, of mills, of aqueducts, of canals, of storehouses, are to be seen everywhere. No hand is ever stirred to repair them, so that during the past spring, there has been a waste of superabundant water in such favoured places as Granada, whilst the country, for hundreds of miles around, has been turned to dust for lack of a proper distribution of the precious fluid. If to the student of the Past and the lover of the beautiful in Art it is distressing to note how the Spaniards have despoiled and defaced, where they have not utterly destroyed, it is sad for the ordinary traveller to see how wilfully the practical benefits bestowed on the land by the Moors have been allowed to fall into uselessness. One instance out of a score which we might quote will suffice. In Moorish Cordoba there were nine hundred public baths. In Spanish Cordoba there is not one.

So far we have dwelt upon the effects of Spanish inertness in the Spaniards themselves as are apparent to the eye of the ordinary traveller; let us now see how it affects the latter.

Spain has always been a land of beggars. Now, it would seem, beggars are more than a very strong minority in the population. Leisurely attention to the objects of interest is rendered a veritable penance by the importunities of all sorts and conditions of beggar men, women, and children at all times and at all places. The old-time beggar had generally something heart-touching to show in order to loosen purse-strings—he was blind, or maimed, or age-bowed, or fitted out in scanty rags. But the beggar of to-day is, as often as not, a decently clothed and well-fed individual. The mere appearance of a man is no guarantee of his respectability. If you are sketching, let us say, and one who is apparently a well-to-do

tradesman or artisan takes a polite and intelligent interest in your work, you are affable with him, and perhaps encourage him to talk by asking questions and making remarks, but do not be surprised if, when you have completed your sketch and are raising your hat to wish him good-morning, he puts out his hand and asks a trifle of you for the love of God! Men beg with cigarettes between their lips, women with loaves of bread under their arms, children with their mouths so full that they can hardly articulate *cinco centimos*. In Seville and Toledo the plague is bad enough, but in Granada it is so virulent that it goes a long way toward driving visitors away from a city in which they would fain linger for some time. Yet the proud Spanish gentleman sees the poor foreign visitor thus waylaid, and pestered, and tormented, and feels not a spark of shame for his countrymen; and indeed would probably endorse the Spanish mendicant creed that he who gives is doing himself spiritual good exactly in the ratio that he is physically benefiting the recipient.

Again, extortion is rife, and the tipping system has developed into a positive curse, although for this we who tip must be held primarily responsible.

'My poor carabineers must live somehow: their pay is next to nothing!' replied a Cadiz custom-house official of position to a visitor, who had complained that after his luggage had actually passed examination, a carabineer had pounced on it, insisting upon it being re-examined. By which he clearly meant that all inconvenience and unpleasantness might have been avoided by the judicious outlay of a *peseta*.

The one consoling feature of the tipping plague in Spain is that the Spaniard is satisfied with a very little. The uniformed official whose counterpart at home would not condescend to accept a tip, gives a hearty *muchas gracias* for a couple of reals—fivepence. One grand exception to a general rule, however, must be made. Priests in cathedrals, liveried officials in museums and show-places, railway officers—all look for tips, but the men of the civil guard—that fine, smart body of picked military police, without the existence of which, life and property in Spain would not be safe, are incorruptible. The extortion to which the visitor is exposed is principally practised by the hotel-keepers. Some sort of excuse perhaps may be made for the custom amongst Seville landlords of doubling their rates during Holy Week, and the annual four days' Fair; but why Granada, a long day's journey off, should follow suit, it is difficult to comprehend.

Hotels have much improved in Spain outside Madrid and Seville during the last few years, although very much remains to be done before strangers can be induced to remain in such towns as Burgos, Segovia, Salamanca and Valladolid for an hour longer than is absolutely necessary for the seeing of the sights there. But first-class rates are charged for what is nothing more than third-class accommodation, and often for what is very much worse. Two reasons explain this. First, the all-devouring Cuban war, which means heavy taxation upon all householders; Second, monopoly. In very

few cities, except the great centres of business and pleasure, is there more than one hotel at which a civilised traveller can put up, and the owners of these hotels, knowing the fact, gather in their harvest. Trains in Spain usually start at unholy hours of the morning, and the hotel-landlords take advantage of this fact to carry out the national 'to-morrow' creed with adroitness. Guests who intend to leave by the four or six A.M. train, usually demand their bills over-night, but some excuse is invariably forthcoming which enables the landlord to present his bill the next morning when it is half dark, and the departing guest is but half awake, and the railway omnibus is at the door, and every minute is precious: the result being that the victim pays just what is put down, unless he chooses to argue the case and lose his train—as often as not the only one of the day.

A rule which should never be neglected, is to have your agreement for prices to be paid thoroughly understood beforehand. Generally it is advisable to write for rooms ahead, so that an answer in black and white is received which effectually checks the extortion which will assuredly be attempted.

That all these evils should exist to militate against the comfort of travelling in Spain is a thousand pities. A little energy, a little foresight, a little smothering of the national contempt for anybody who is not Spanish, would mean the opening up of a country second to none in point of human interest, however lacking it may be in natural beauty, to thousands of tourists who are justly deterred from making Spain a holiday ground by travellers' tales which are, in this case, but too true. Assuredly Spanish pride need not be affronted by imitating the examples of other European countries, which have realised that a very sensible national benefit accrues from offering every inducement for strangers with money, and ready to spend it, to come annually. There are places on the Spanish coasts which, with outlay and enterprise, would rival the famous Riviera resorts of which people are beginning to tire. There are pleasant cities and towns in Spain, which might be made the centres of foreign residential colonies.

As it is, positively no inducements are offered. The Spanish railway service, except the tri-weekly Sud-Express—is simply execrable. A journey of two hundred miles occupies an entire day, so slowly does the train creep along the single line of rails; and if the carriages are well enough, comfortable travelling in them is entirely nullified by the fact that smoking is allowed in every compartment but one or two in each train. As for the Spanish Post-office, and its Poste Restante arrangements, and its system of losing letters, and the utter indifference of its officials to complaints and reclamations—the less said about it the better.

Still, Spain will always fascinate the traveller. Indeed, by some enthusiasts for the old order of things everywhere but in their own immediate world, the very drawbacks we have enumerated make a recommendation for those who are weary of the new-fangled, luxurious science of modern travel. 'Sir,' said an American to the writer, 'I would not have a beggar the less in Spain. I've always read that beggars

were a feature of old Spain as well as of modern : I've come to see one country on God's earth where things are as they were, and Spain's the locality.' The next minute he was wildly cursing a horde of beggars who had sniffed him out, and declaring that the plague demanded Government interference.

Summing up. Spain is a charming holiday-land for hardy young men, for ladies who do not mind putting up with a certain amount of discomfort, and above all, for those travellers who are not pressed for time. But not yet for delicate ladies, much less for invalids.

## THE FASCINATION OF THE KING.

### CHAPTER III.—I HELP THE KING.

In placing before you the circumstances which brought about the curious adventure which it is the purpose of this narrative to relate, my one dread is, that you may not see it in the light I intend, and that you may therefore set down the action as being too precipitate to be likely to influence a man of my admittedly peculiar temperament. If you *do* come to this conclusion I will forgive you. Indeed, I will go even further than that, and confess that you have every excuse for so thinking, for now that I come to look through what I have written, myself, I find that it impresses me in the same way to a very large extent. In reality, however, short as was our acquaintance with the curious individual who had constituted himself King of the Médangs by such romantic, though unorthodox means, we found ourselves, by the time we had met him a dozen times, regarding him with just that sort of friendliness we should feel for a person whom we had known all our lives long. Having told you this, it would seem trite to describe him as a man of extraordinary parts, for, to be plain with you, I have never met such another in the whole course of my experience.

During my first interview with him, as arranged at Lady Hammerton's 'At Home,' I was permitted an opportunity of studying his character more carefully than I had yet done. I found him diplomatic in his utterances, very reserved as to his own opinions, if possible a little too prone to look for interested motives in others, and yet with it all, if such an anomaly can be understood, generous and impetuous to the last degree. His territory, so I gathered, lay somewhere in the *hinterland* of Annam, a fertile region clearly capable, if his account could be relied on, of great developments. Of his earlier exploits in the country he said not a word, nor did he tell me any of his adventures connected with the usurpation of the throne. He spoke modestly of his own achievements, but referred with gratitude to the help he had received from the white men he had imported later on. As far as I could gather, the chief thorns in his side were the Jesuit priests who, though they had welcomed him as king in the beginning, and had derived con-

siderable benefit from his rule, seemed determined to leave no stone unturned to harass and annoy him. He also accused them of trafficking with his neighbours the French, whose Government you must understand had tacitly recognised him as monarch of the country. For nearly two hours we sat in the balcony of his house talking and looking down on the canal, and during every minute of that time I seemed to be coming nearer and nearer to a proper understanding of the man. I may tell you that the fascination he had exercised over me since I had first set eyes on him had in no way abated, and I was now doing my utmost to strengthen it by a sincere admiration. When I rose to go, he held out his hand.

'Good-bye, my lord,' he said. 'I have to thank you for your call. I have enjoyed my conversation with you immensely.' Then, as if an afterthought had struck him, he added, 'I trust your sister, Lady Olivia, is quite well?'

'Thank you, she is in the best of health,' I answered. 'She has met some English acquaintances this afternoon, and is showing them the sights of Venice. I think my sister informed me that your Majesty intended to obtain an opinion from a doctor here regarding your own health?'

'I am to see him on Monday next,' he answered, with a look in his eyes that at the time I did not understand; 'then I shall know my fate. I find that it takes all the fortitude one possesses to meet it bravely. When one is playing for such high stakes, it seems so hard to have to run the risk of losing all through ill-health, does it not?'

'But perhaps there is nothing really wrong with you. Some little disorder which will soon be set right. We must pray for you, and hope for the best.'

'I should be grateful for your prayers,' he answered, with that literal seriousness which I soon discovered was characteristic of the man. 'God knows I want to live. I have so much work before me. When do you leave Venice; have you decided yet?'

'We have made up our minds to remain for a week longer,' I replied. 'I am having some improvements made on board my yacht, and she will not be ready before that time.'

'Then I trust I may be able to persuade you to give me the pleasure of your company again. Your society is both pleasant and profitable to me.'

'Your Majesty honours me, I am sure,' I answered. 'I shall place myself at your disposal whenever you care to see me. Good-bye.'

We shook hands, and I went down-stairs.

As De Trailles had said, the owner of the house, whoever or whatever he or she may have been, furnished and managed it superbly while the king was in it. A more beautiful residence could not have been desired, and as I made my way down the stairs, and saw the crowd of lackeys spring to attention in the hall, I could only use the old expression familiar to our childhood, and say that it was a palace 'fit for a king.' I felt, however, that I would have given something to have known the secret of it all.

When I reached the Hotel Galaghetti, I found



Olivia already returned from her excursion. She inquired after the king's health, and I noticed that when she spoke of him, there was a different look upon her face than it had worn that day when we met him for the first time in the church of S. Rocco. And yet Olivia has not the reputation of being, by any manner of means, a woman easily impressed.

'You seem to be very much interested in the King of the Médangs, Olivia,' I said, with a smile, after I had described my visit.

'Could one help being so when one had once met him?' she answered. 'It irritates me now to think that I ever scoffed at him. When do you expect to hear from Lord Blenkinson?'

'On Monday, I hope.'

'You will let me know what he says, will you not?'

'I think I may very safely promise to do that,' I answered. Then, as if on an afterthought, I turned to her and took her hand. 'Olivia,' I said, 'I hope, my dear, you will forgive me for what I am about to say—but—but—well, to put it bluntly, you know the extraordinary fascination this man exercises over people. There is no fear of'—?

'Of my falling in love with him, I suppose you are going to say,' she cried, her cheeks flaming. 'You need not exercise yourself on that score. I am not a schoolgirl that I should fall in love with every man with whom I am brought in contact.'

'I should be miserable if I thought I had offended you, dear,' I said, as I placed my arm round her waist. 'I had no other intention than to warn you. For there can be no denying the fact, the man is undeniably handsome; he has also just that savour of romance about him that appeals with such irresistible force to the majority of women.'

'Thank you,' she answered, a little haughtily. 'I hope you will not include me in the category. His Majesty is most charming, I admit, still I fancy I have met a sufficiency of charming men to be able to steel my heart against his fascinations. It is hard upon a woman that she cannot sympathise with a man who has set his heart upon great deeds, without its being supposed that she must necessarily fall in love with him. I cannot help thinking you are unjust, Instow.'

With this Parthian shot, she rose from her chair, and left the room. That I had offended her I had no doubt, and that I was sorry I had done so was equally certain, but at the same time, I could not help congratulating myself, should there have been anything of the sort in trail, on my astuteness in having warned her in time. I loved my sister, and I am also immensely proud of her; and, however romantic and fascinating the King of the Médangs might prove, I had no desire that he should spoil her life for her.

The thought that Olivia's heart might prove susceptible to His Majesty's influence had hitherto been the one thing which had prevented me from cultivating his acquaintance as thoroughly as I should like to have done. Now, however, that I was reassured on that point, I resolved to avail myself, as far as was possible, of all the opportunities which presented themselves

of seeing him. There was not the slightest difficulty in this, and by the time Blenkinson's letter arrived, which was on the Tuesday following the conversation above narrated, I began to think I was as familiar with his character as one man could well be with another's. The letter ran as follows:

'THE FOREIGN OFFICE, 12th March 18—.

'DEAR INSTOW—My hearty thanks are due to you for your letter of Wednesday last. I should have replied to it sooner had I been able to lay my hand at once upon the papers connected with the matter to which you refer. You ask me what information I can give you regarding one Marie David de Méraut, who styles himself King of the Médangs. The following is, I imagine, all that is generally known concerning that romantic, and, if a Foreign Minister may so far commit himself, very interesting personage.

'From what is known of him, it is supposed that Méraut made his first appearance in the East, during the years 1880 and 1881, in the French Colony of Tonquin, where he saw service in guerilla warfare against the Chinese pirates that abound along the coast. In 1883 he left the French, and joined the Dutch, fought against the Atchinese, and proved himself made of such good metal that he was entrusted with the command of a regiment employed on special duty. In 1885 he turned up in Hong-kong, where he remained for a week, and then vanished in the direction of Japan, staying there six months or thereabouts, eventually returning to Tonquin on some mysterious errand, the exact importance of which was by no means understood then. Eighteen months later, however, it was announced that he had invaded a country at the back of Annam, inhabited by a tribe called the Médangs, and had appointed himself Regent for the imbecile king, then upon the throne. Early in 1888 we were officially informed that he had declared himself king, with the full and free consent of the people; had signed treaties with the adjoining tribes, was fast developing the country, and more extraordinary still, by the exercise of almost superhuman impudence and diplomacy, had induced his big neighbour, France, to accept him at his own valuation. Since then it is understood he has proved himself a beneficent ruler; the country has made wonderful progress, its industries are being developed in every direction, and if only the present ruler remains at the head of affairs, which is always a matter of chance in those regions, and the French do not see fit to change their present line of action as far as he is concerned, there is no saying what his future may not be. One glance at the map will show you that beyond a contingent interest in the welfare of Siam, England has no share in the question, France, China, and Siam being the only nations brought into close contact with the Médangs. For this reason, we neither countenance nor oppose him. I trust my information may be of service to you. If I can help you in any other way, you know how gladly I will do so. With kind regards to Lady Olivia and yourself, believe me, my dear Instow, always cordially yours,  
BLENKINSON.'

I read the letter carefully through, and then placed it in my pocket. The man's career, as here set forth, agreed very well with what I had been told. I felt glad that there was nothing in it of which any one could feel ashamed. His personality had interested me more than anything had done for years past; and I should have been sorry indeed had I found him out in anything discreditable. When I was with him I seemed to partake of his enthusiasm, to catch a glimpse of the object of his life, and to feel rising up in my heart the thrill of the most deadly of all ambitions, that of throne creating.

When Olivia came down to breakfast, I showed her the letter I had received. She read it in silence, and after she had finished it, handed it back to me. I waited for her to speak, but it was some moments before she did so.

'If I were His Majesty, I think I should be a very proud man,' she said, with a sparkle in her eye that I could not help noticing. 'How many kings can claim to have accomplished so much in so short a time?'

'If what Blenkinson says is true, and I have no reason to suppose it is not, he is a wonderful man indeed,' I answered; and then changed the subject by inquiring what she intended doing with herself that morning. She replied that she had arranged to call upon Lady Hamerton at eleven, in order to go shopping with her. I was glad of this, for I wanted to be alone to write some letters, and to execute some business at the English Consulate.

While she was speaking, a servant approached us. He informed me that a person of the name of Wells was in the hall, and desired to speak to me.

'Wells? Then the yacht has arrived,' I said, turning to Olivia. 'Now we must make up our minds when we shall leave Venice.'

I thought that Olivia's face suddenly turned a little pale, but for several reasons I did not comment on it. I rather let her go to her room, and went out into the hall to find my skipper. He informed me that the repairs I had authorised to be made in the yacht had been effected sooner than he expected, and that everything was now in readiness for the voyage to the East, whenever I was prepared to start. I told him I would communicate with him later on in the day, and then returned to my daily paper.

It was nearly half-past eleven by the time Olivia was ready to go out. I hailed a gondola for her, and put her into it, and then set off on my own concerns. On reaching Sir John's residence, she went up the steps, and inquired from the butler if Lady Hamerton were at home.

'Her ladyship is in, my lady,' answered the man, 'but I fear she cannot see you. Her ladyship, I regret to say, is indisposed to-day, and is confined to her bed.'

'I am exceedingly sorry to hear it,' said Olivia. 'Will you please give her my love and inform her that I called.'

'I will be sure to do so, my lady,' replied the man; and Olivia was turning to go down the steps to her gondola again, when she became aware of a man who had just disembarked, and

was coming up. One glance told her that it was the King of the Médangs. He raised his hat, and as he did so, Olivia noticed how haggard and worn his face had grown.

'Good-morning, Lady Olivia,' he said. 'Have you been calling upon Lady Hamerton?'

'I was going shopping with her this morning,' Olivia replied, 'but I have just been informed that she is not well, and is unable to leave her room to-day. I am the more sorry as I fear it may be the last chance I shall have of seeing her.'

'Indeed. Are you then contemplating leaving Venice so soon?'

'We may leave at any moment now,' she answered. 'The yacht arrived this morning, and I fancy my brother is eager to be off.'

The King was silent for a few moments. Then he said, very slowly:

'I am sorry to hear that you are going. It seems my fate to make new friends only to lose them again as quickly. I wonder if you would dismiss your gondola, and permit me to walk back with you to your hotel? You were kind enough last week to say that you would like to hear my doctor's report. I have received it to-day.'

She looked up at him and coloured a little as she acceded to his request. He accordingly dismissed both gondolas, and returning to my sister's side, escorted her down the river towards the Rialto Bridge.

'And what has your doctor told you?' asked Olivia, as they walked along. 'I hope he has relieved you of some of your anxiety.'

'He has relieved me of my anxiety, I must confess,' replied the other with a grim smile. 'But hardly in the way I understand you to mean. I have no longer the dread uncertainty hanging over me, for I know my fate!'

She hesitated a little before she put her next question.

'And what has he told you?'

'Ah! can you not guess?' he asked. 'The sum total of his report is that under ordinary circumstances I have not two years to live.'

Olivia uttered a little cry of horror. She could hardly believe that she heard aright. Apart from his thin face and large sunken eyes, the man looked strong and well enough. Seeing her consternation, he was quick to express his sorrow.

'I should not have told you so abruptly,' he said. 'It was wrong of me, and I ask your pardon. In the presence of one's own misfortune, one forgets to think of others. Can you forgive me?'

'There is nothing to forgive,' she answered. 'But oh, I cannot believe that it is as bad as you say. Surely you must have misunderstood what was said to you. There are other doctors in Europe. See them. Try Paris—try London—try Berlin. Seek the cleverest men; they may tell you differently.'

He only shook his head.

'I have seen so many now,' he said, 'and though they differ in one or two minor details, they agree in the main essentials. No, Lady Olivia, I know the bitter truth at last. Hard as he has worked, terribly as he has toiled, I fear Marie the First's reign is nearly at an

end. Another two years, and the kingdom I have devoted my life to building up, will fall again to the ground like a house of cards. I have been ploughing in sand, that is all.'

She saw that he was quite unstrung, and with quick womanly tact, endeavoured to divert his thoughts into another channel. She was too artistic, however, to do so by changing the subject altogether.

'I suppose in this case you will soon be thinking of returning to your country?' she said.

'God knows,' he answered. 'Now that I have learned the truth, I hardly know whether I shall ever go back. What can I do there?'

'But you *must* go back,' she cried, pressing her advantage. 'The country requires you more than ever.'

'The country will soon have to do without me altogether,' he replied. 'But there, Lady Olivia, I must not talk to you any more about my wretched self, or you will set me down as a coward. You do not think I have proved myself one so far, do you?'

'I shall never think you a coward,' she answered. 'Have I not heard your story?'

She could scarcely have paid him a more delicate compliment, and it was evident he appreciated it at its full value.

## OUR IMPORTED VEGETABLES.

By R. HEDGER WALLACE.

Is this subject of any importance? some may ask, for the import of fruit and vegetables must be small on account of their perishable nature! When in reply it is pointed out that we pay away over *one hundred and sixty-six thousand pounds sterling weekly* for fruit and vegetables, as was done in 1895, it is surely of considerable importance, and that a little inquiry into the subject will not be misspent. In 1895 was spent, under this head, altogether over 8½ millions, and in 1894 over 9 millions sterling, the reduction last year being due to our smaller importations of apples, cherries, plums, and pears. From what countries do we draw our supplies? In our endeavour to answer this interesting question we will at first restrict ourselves to three items in our trade and navigation returns—to the imports of raw onions, potatoes, and unenumerated raw vegetables, under which head are included peas, French beans, cauliflowers, spinach, beetroot, radishes, turnips, and cucumbers. As regards onions, Egypt, Spain, and Holland send us over a million bushels each. France sends over half a million bushels, and Portugal, Belgium, Germany, Turkey, and the United States send us smaller quantities. From Malta we get about 50,000 bushels, and from other British possessions about 3000 bushels. When we turn to potatoes, the Channel Islands lead the way by exporting hither about 57,000 tons, followed by France with 45,000 tons. We also import from Holland, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, Canary Islands, Malta, and Spain in quantities varying from 13,000 tons to 700 tons. Turning now to the figures of raw, unenumerated vegetables,

we find that we are indebted to most of the chief countries of Europe for our supplies.

The market for imported fruit and vegetables is in London, even such a town as Glasgow drawing a large proportion of its supplies from the metropolis. We are apt to think there is only one market in London, the well-known Covent Garden, but in reality there are three. Covent Garden is the best emporium for luxuries and rarities; but Spitalfields is in some respects the most important of the London markets, and is amply supplied with the plainer kinds of green food, immense quantities of potatoes, peas, cabbage, and every conceivable vegetable finding their way hither. Similar to Spitalfields is the 'Borough' market on the south side of the Thames, and there is also a small market at Farringdon Road. Covent Garden is held under a charter granted in 1661 by Charles II., and the same monarch granted a charter for Spitalfields in 1682. The 'Borough' market is established by virtue of a charter granted by Edward VI. These markets deal in gigantic quantities; it is as easy to buy in them 20 tons of grapes or tomatoes as 100 tons of potatoes. The wholesale fruit and vegetable markets of London are exceptional in their resources; it is stated that in no other country in the world is the accommodation so ample, and that nowhere are supplies dealt with and handled on such an extensive scale. It is interesting to note how the foreign trade in vegetables and fruit seems to be in Hebrew hands, and this applies not only to the auctioneers and salesmen in Covent Garden, but to large dealers in London and other towns, even as far north as Glasgow.

That the supplies of foreign produce compete with the early produce of our farmers and market gardeners cannot be gainsaid. Our own farmers compete with market gardeners as regards greens and cabbages, with this advantage that when the market is glutted they can feed their stock with the green stuff. A few farmers also who are favourably situated as regards accessibility to a good steady market, grow for the vegetable market peas, beans, turnips, and early potatoes. But what our market gardeners feel in this competition with foreign produce is that the fancy prices given for early produce goes into the foreigners' pockets, as their early vegetables and salads are now imported some weeks before those grown in England are ready for market. Among the expensive dainties obtainable in London this year in February were asparagus, new green peas (from France), French beans, and the pale greenish haricots, called flageolets. Early turnips, carrots, peas, and French beans come from France, the Canary Islands, Madeira, and Algeria long before the earliest crops are ready here. Lettuces are imported in large quantities from France and the Canary Islands as early as January. In France, crops of lettuce and endive are systematically raised in succession, but similar methods, as far as we are aware, are not attempted here. Along with their lettuce the French send us a somewhat ungainly bulbous root called celeriac which West-end *chefs* use in soup, when celery is not to be had, seeing that it has the same flavour. Bona

file market gardeners at one time looked upon celery as a very paying crop; now it is grown by farmers especially upon sewage farms, and markets are over supplied. Large quantities are grown in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Cucumbers are now imported so largely from Holland, and are usually so plentiful and cheap, that most market gardeners have ceased to grow them. A large quantity of cucumbers are sold to go to Lancashire and Yorkshire, for towns like Leeds and Bradford. Our own growers send their cucumbers to Germany, and this trade, which is on the increase, is due to the care taken in grading and packing, and using a suitable and uniform package. From Holland, also, large importations of beetroot and red cabbage for pickling are made. The consumption of table beetroot has increased enormously, and hundreds of tons are used in the manufacture of high-class dog-biscuits, as it improves the food, and allays the heating of the animal's skin. This is not mangel-wurzel or Suffolk beet, but table beet, which is more tender and of superior texture. As the consumption of table beet has increased, the sale of Jerusalem artichokes has declined. It is now an unfashionable tuber, and few retailers will venture to stock it. Radishes, a profitable crop, are now imported in large quantities from February to April from Paris, St Malo, and the Channel Islands, completely forestalling the English produce. Asparagus also produced a considerable profit, but the importations from Toulouse, Dijon, Paris, and parts of Spain, which begins in January, and continues till the English asparagus is ready, has rendered the crop less profitable.

Asparagus, packed carefully in fresh grass, is one of the vegetables which lends itself well to locomotion, and travels as easily from Brittany as from Twickenham or Isleworth. Again, in severe winters when English savoy and broccoli have succumbed, Italy and Algiers send us cauliflowers, but on account of long carriage they are costly. This year, in January and February, few Italian cauliflowers reached this country, and, owing to the mildness of the winter, Brittany cauliflowers, which are splendid specimens, ousted the smaller southern cauliflowers from popular favour, while a large proportion of our supply came from Cornwall.

Perhaps some idea will be gained of our foreign importations if we simply note the fruits and vegetables offered for sale in London one day this year, the second of April, for example. The unenumerated vegetables came from Holland, France, Belgium, Bristol, West Indies, Italy, Germany, Mauritius, and the United States; onions from Germany, Holland, Egypt, France, Belgium, and Spain; garlic from Spain; tomatoes from Italy, France, Spain, and the Canaries; and potatoes from Malta, Germany, France, Belgium, and the Canaries. As regards fruit, there were lemons from Spain, France, and Italy; oranges from Asiatic Turkey, Spain, and France; bananas from Madeira and the Canaries; pine-apple from St Michael's and Singapore; grapes from the Cape and Guernsey; almonds from Teneriffe, Portugal, Spain, and Italy; walnuts from France; figs from Italy;

green figs from Guernsey; apples from Canada and Tasmania; cocoa-nuts from Ceylon and the East and West Indies; ginger from Hong-kong and Japan; olives from France; rasp pulp from Melbourne; peanuts from the States and Japan; and small nuts from Germany, France, Spain, and Asiatic Turkey.

Let us carry our inquiry a step further. We have scanned the shipping list for arrivals at nine of our seaports, and find that at the same date—on April second—there were vessels at these ports with flowers, fruit, and vegetables from the following sources. At Harwich, from Rotterdam, with cut flowers, flower roots, onions, grass seed, and vegetables; from Antwerp with fruit, new potatoes, apples, clover-seed, and vegetables; and from Hamburg with potatoes and vegetables. At Folkestone, from Boulogne, there were packages of new potatoes, cut flowers, plants, vegetables, and onions. At Newhaven, from Dieppe, were landed packages of apples, plants, new potatoes, vegetables, oranges, cut flowers, fruit, clover-seed, and onions; from St Nazaire, apples, plants, and vegetables; and from Caen, apples, plants, dried fruit, trees, and onions. At Dover, from Calais, there were packages of cut flowers, vegetables, fruit, plants and dates; and from Ostend, cut flowers. At Bristol there were onions from Valencia and Boulogne, vegetables from Amsterdam, potatoes from Hamburg, and oranges from Castellon. At Hull were landed packages of onions, vegetables, cut flowers, cabbages, and apples from Rotterdam; vegetables, cut flowers, onions, and cut fruit from Boulogne; oranges and onions from Valencia; flowers from Amsterdam; almonds from Bari; nuts, oranges, and lemons from Messina, and fruit from Palermo. At Southampton, there were from Jersey, vegetables, cut flowers, new potatoes, figs, and grapes; from Guernsey, vegetables, new potatoes, cut flowers, green figs, and new grapes; from Cape Town, tomatoes, grapes, and pears; from Madeira, bananas and French beans; from Rotterdam, onions, plants, and beans; from St Malo, vegetables; from Pernambuco, plants; from Honfleur, cut flowers, spring cabbages, broccoli, apples, onions, clover, and grass seed; from Havre, vegetables and plants; from Cherbourg, broccoli and spring cabbages; from Tréguier, potatoes; from New York, oranges, apples, and bananas; from Granville, fruit; and from Dominica, limes. At Liverpool were landed oranges from Burriana, Smyrna, Bordeaux, Castellon, and Oporto; onions from Smyrna and Oporto; apples from St Nazaire, St John (N.B.), Boston, Portland (Maine), Halifax, and New York; vegetables from Amsterdam; peas from Hamburg; nuts from New York; potatoes from Portland (Maine); and prunes, plums, tomatoes, walnuts, and mushrooms from Bordeaux. Last of all, at London, there were cut flowers, prunes, monkey nuts, oranges, new potatoes, walnuts, orchids, pine-apples, plums, tomatoes, onions, bananas, almonds, pistachios, cabbages, apricots, garlic, cut fruit, lemons, and herbs. Among the various ports of origin for some of these consignments are Flushing, Bordeaux, Singapore, New York, Tréport, Teneriffe, Ostend, Rotterdam, Las Palmas, Madeira, Naples, Messina, Palermo, Boulogne, Valencia, Havre,



Amsterdam, Alexandria, Gibraltar, and Lisbon. The imports of fruits and vegetables to Manchester by the Ship Canal, in 1895, were 22,000 tons of oranges, 3400 tons of potatoes, 700 tons of lemons, 200 tons of apples, 200 tons of pomegranates, 500 tons of tomatoes, 100 tons of melons, 160 tons of grapes, 13,400 tons of onions, and 5200 tons of dried fruit.

There are two vegetables which call for special attention—namely, potatoes and onions. As regards potatoes, the British-grown tuber holds its own. During the past twenty-five years, the character of the potato trade has undergone a great and significant change, and the volume of imported potatoes has decreased considerably. For the three years ending 1875, the average annual importation was 268,157 tons. For the three years ending 1895, the annual average importation was 154,835 tons.

As we write, the current price for potatoes is £1 per ton, and we know farmers in Lincolnshire who will be glad to get 10s. per ton, and be clear of their stock. Yet in the poor districts of London, potatoes are retailed by the shopkeepers and costermongers at the rate of 4 lb. for 2d., which amounts to £4, 5s. per ton for inferior and small potatoes, the best kinds of which are retailed in the West End to private families, hotels, and large firms of caterers at prices that give £6 per ton. The importation of German potatoes has greatly declined, yet some years ago the German redskins held a high place in the market. The Belgian kidney used to be the very best potato in the market during September, now it has no longer a place in the market reports for that month. The growing of early varieties of potatoes was formerly an important source of profit to the British market gardener, but it is not so now, owing to the steady supply from the south of Europe. The arrivals of new potatoes commence about Christmas-time and continue in increasing quantities till May, when the Channel Islands' season begins, and then they carry on the importation till August.

When we turn to onions, we find there has latterly been a most extraordinary increase in the importations. Onions, some years ago, were regarded as a safe-paying crop, but latterly, owing to foreign competition, it is a crop by which growers have lost heavily. Some profit, however, is still made from young 'bunching' onions in May and June, as onions are not imported in this form. Twenty years ago, Holland was the largest exporting country for onions, but our imports from this source have now considerably decreased, while they have much increased from Germany, France, and Spain, and have been more than quadrupled from Egypt. To describe the foreign bulb in a few words, it may be stated that Belgium, the north of France, and Germany supply the small kind of pale-coloured flat onion, resembling those of Essex and Bedfordshire. Holland sends the same kind, and also a red-fleshed onion, not very big, but of lower value. Germany exports the 'globe' variety, solid and firm. From the Bordeaux district we get an onion of a larger size, pink-fleshed, and less firm in texture than those grown in higher latitudes. Portugal and Spain send a mon-

strous onion, sold per pound by grocers, and known as Spanish. These magnificent specimens are due to a favourable climate, with ample and continuous heat, the practice of irrigation, and the system of ridging up the soil so as to shield the bulb from the fierce rays of a noonday sun. Egypt exports a very compact, sound onion, rather larger in size than the English sample, which travels well, and reaches England in splendid condition, clean, bright, free from dirt or sand, and having an inviting aspect when presented for sale.

We have noted how our imports of onions have increased from Egypt, and it is acknowledged that this country is at present the most active and aggressive competitor in the onion trade. Egypt has been regarded by some people as the land of pyramids and mummies only, but it has from time immemorial had a reputation for onions. Ancient Egyptians swore by the onion, and regarded the plant as sacred. The inscription on the pyramid of Cheops tells us that the workmen had onions given to them; and from the Bible we learn that the Hebrews, when slaves under Pharaoh, enjoyed these bulbs, and that when far away they remembered 'the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic.' The trade with Egypt for onions is now so important that four lines of steamers are engaged in the traffic, bringing consignments from Alexandria to Liverpool, Hull, and London. The Egyptian onion is a handsome and useful vegetable, and by selecting the best strains of seed the quality tends, year by year, to improve. The Egyptian knows two varieties, the 'Baali' and the 'Miskaoui,' but supplies of the latter kind are seldom sent abroad, as they absorb so much moisture from the frequently irrigated ground in which they are grown that they do not stand a sea-voyage well. The 'Baali' onion is the more popular Egyptian onion, and is grown in yellow soil, which is sparingly watered while the bulbs are maturing, in order that the onions may stand a lengthy sea-voyage with little risk of 'sprouting.' So excellent in quality are these onions, that efforts are, it is said, being made in other countries to raise onions from Egyptian seed.

Under the social and economic conditions of life in England, market garden land must be high-rented, as such land is always desired close to large centres of population. Of course, it is possible that rents may come down; but this is one of those cases where a thing is possible, but not at all probable. What handicaps the industry more than high rent is the scarcity and dearness of labour. As regards female labour, it is a matter of sentiment; but undoubtedly their labour is most useful in some of the processes of cultivation and after-management of vegetables. Excessive railway rates constitute a legitimate grievance, and the action taken lately by the leading companies is in itself an acknowledgment that they have been giving the foreign grower the preference, to the disadvantage of the home grower. Such associations as the British Produce Supply Association, of which Lord Winchelsea is originator, have been formed to 'inaugurate a new and improved system for the purchase, distribution, and sale of British agricultural produce.' As an

illustration of the excessive charges which we have had to submit to, it may be mentioned that it costs less to bring agricultural seeds from Chicago to London, a distance of about 4000 miles, of which 1000 are by rail and 3000 by steamer, than it does from stations within 150 miles of London. The scarcity of distributing centres, which is also engaging attention at the present day, will no doubt be adjusted in conjunction with railway rates, with which it is closely connected. But the practice of consigning the major portion of the produce grown to the few existing markets there are in the country is responsible at present for gluts and unremunerative returns. It is strange that, however abundant the produce might be, and however bad the prices ruling at the market, still to the local consumer the price rarely falls. And yet some people are surprised that others go into town for their supplies.

The want of technical knowledge is susceptible of self-adjustment, and depends on the grower himself. It is not a question of digging and hoeing, but of giving care to small details; of being in close touch with the markets, and, therefore, well and regularly posted up as to supply and demand; of getting reliable and continuous information as to immediate and prospective market wants; and of being always on the lookout, and ready to adapt 'ideas' though they may be 'new.' A writer in the *Kew Bulletin* on this subject points out another cause for the large importation of vegetable produce—the increasing prosperity of the country, and the rise in the 'standard of comfort;' that is, we have got rich and lazy, and would rather buy an article of consumption from outside than take the trouble to produce it ourselves. So long as the foreigner is ready and willing to deny himself the enjoyment of the produce of his soil and climate so that he may draw on our wealth, and so long as the price of labour allows cabbages or any other vegetable to be grown more cheaply in Holland or anywhere else than they can be grown in England, these vegetables will be imported, and compete on favourable terms with our own produce.

## GEORDIE'S JUSTICE.

### II.

THAT despairing shriek brought unexpected aid to poor Tommy. It reached the ears of Geordie Donce, and Geordie's experience told him that such a shriek could only be caused by some most unusual accident.

He ran quickly from the corner of the shed in which he had what he called his 'office'—a bare stool and desk black with age, smoke, and grease—and in a few seconds reached the scene of the tragedy.

At once his keen, sharp eyes took in the situation: Sam and another of the gang making frantic efforts to move the lever, great drops of perspiration oozing from their foreheads; one man trying to undo the knotted cords, whilst another made desperate attempts

to cut them with a blunt jack-knife; big Bob Rowe using his herculean strength in an endeavour to draw back the plate from the grip of the roller. All this Geordie saw at a glance.

Near by there stood a gigantic sledge-hammer, a hammer which was the joy of Bob's life. None but he could wield it. Nothing delighted him so much as to bring it down, on forging or anvil, with a ringing blow that would shake the ground for yards around.

This mighty tool Geordie seized and swung round his head once—he was sixty-five that day; twice, and the swollen veins on his forehead seemed ready to burst; a third swing he gave it, and once again the bright head of the hammer flashed through the air with cutting 'swish.' Then, with a final turn, he brought it down full on the edge of the slowly moving cog-wheel at the end of the upper roller. So fair and heavy a blow had he dealt that the great wheel was broken in three pieces, which fell, with dull thuds, to the ground.

The sudden jar released the lever, and back it swung, dealing Sam a heavy blow on the stomach; the plate ceased to move, and Tommy was saved, but not before the cruel, grinding roller had gripped fingers, hand, and wrist.

What has taken so long to describe only occupied the fractional part of a minute in its execution. Not a word did Geordie utter; his thin lips were closed like a rat-trap over his square, straight-cut mouth.

Having dealt his record blow he began, with imperious gestures, to direct the men to raise the upper roller and so release the plate. His broad chest panted with the effort he had made. His greasy, black cap had fallen off, and his stiff crop of hair seemed to rise up in suppressed indignation.

The plate released, he proceeded, with rough gentleness, to bind up the crushed hand. With scant ceremony he tore off strips from Bob's shirt, improvised a tourniquet, and so stopped the fearful bleeding. Tommy's first scream had been his last. He lay quite unconscious on the plate, the rust on which formed a dark plane across which streams of blood slowly trickled, and fell drip, drip, drip, drop upon the dusty floor of the mill. Piteful little moans issued from his pallid lips, which seemed doubly pallid in contrast to the general griminess of his face.

The cords unloosed and the hand bound up, Geordie next carried the still unconscious boy to the watchman's hut at the entrance gates. Staunch old bachelor though he was, he bore him along as if he had been accustomed to babies all his life. Some one brought a cab; and Geordie, still with Tommy in his arms, stepped in, and was quickly driven to the hospital.

The rattling of the wheels somewhat roused the boy.

'I'll do it,' he murmured, brokenly; 'I'll do it—if yo'll—ony—take me—off.'

'Whist, then, lad, whist!' said the old man;

'ye're all reet now. It's me as 'as ye. Don't yer know me—Geordie?'

At the sound of the rough, kind voice, Tommy opened his eyes, and seeing the well-known, rugged features of the friend of the 'nippers,' but still not realising that he was safe, sobbed out:

'Please, Mester Donce, don't let 'em do it. I'll kill the nag if they ony let me go!'

Thinking to quiet him, Geordie questioned him, as to what them — chaps had been going to do to him. Then, in broken accents, and with sobs and shivers of dread, he told him all—how they had wanted him to break the machine and how he had 'bested' them; then how they had insisted on his poisoning the 'gaffer's nag,' and, on his refusing, threatened to put him between the rollers.

'An' indeed, indeed, Mester Donce, a wouldn't 'a promised fur to do it, ef a adn' seen they was boun' fur to put me in.'

'Never yo' min', m' lad; never yo' min'. We'll be upsides wi' un. They got Geordie to deal wi' the skunks.'

But then, to the honest fellow's great dismay, Tommy continued the conversation, but on most irrelevant subjects. He told Geordie, among many other things, how he had lately been to a grand rating-match—how his grannie had bought him a new cap which he was to wear to-morrow for the first time, that day being Sunday; and so on, and so on, harking back every now and then to Bob Rowe and his threats.

At last, to the old man's great relief, the hospital was reached, and here willing hands would have relieved him of his burden. But no; Geordie would give Tommy up to no one but 'Mester' Doctor. So he was allowed to carry the lad to the doctor's room.

The latter examined the hand, looked at Tommy's bright eyes, listened to his rambling utterances, and shook his head.

'Will it finish him?' asked Geordie, in what was meant to be a whisper, pointing to the crushed hand.

'Oh no, that's nothing,' replied the doctor; 'but the poor fellow is in high delirium, and that is what I am afraid of.'

'Off his chump, like?' queried Geordie.

'Yes; however, leave him now, and look in in the morning. I may have a more cheerful report to make then.'

— growled Geordie, between his set teeth, as he thrust his hands deep in his breeches' pockets. Had acute eyes followed this action they would have observed peculiar knobby excrescences rising from under the old man's iron-stained moleskins, and would have rightly inferred that each pocket enclosed a huge clenched fist. With this he left the doctor and took himself away.

Geordie lived in a small house wedged between an iron merchant's store on one side and a foundry gate on the other. Opposite was a boiler-maker's yard, and at the back a locomotive shed. The atmosphere of the street had that peculiar smoky flavour so congenial to Geordie's nasal organs, and the air was full of the ringing din he so dearly loved and in which he had spent his entire life. His bodily

comforts, so far as his independent spirit would allow, were attended to by a married niece who lived near. Geordie would allow no woman to live in his house. Every morning his niece came and did what was necessary for the day, running in towards five to make up the fire and put the old bachelor's dinner on the hob.

Having left the hospital the kindly-hearted and indignant foreman trudged off to his lonely home among the ironworks. Entering his kitchen, he took his hot dinner from the hob, and sat him down to his lonely meal. An odour of onion pervaded the small apartment, as Geordie delved among the contents of the brown basin in front of him, and fished up huge squares of meat or great pieces of potatoes. These he transferred to his mouth and masticated with much the same action as one of his mills. The table contained little else than a knife and fork, one blue jug keeping company with a plate of salt.

He held his two-pronged fork in some peculiar manner between the thumb and remaining finger of his left hand. Steadily working his way to the bottom of the basin, he hardly lifted his eyes, or ceased the regular up and down movement of his square jaws till he had scooped up the last drop of gravy on the end of his knife.

Grave thought sat on the old man's face as he ate, ground one might rather say, his simple though very ample meal. His brows were still contracted as when he left the hospital; the echo of his muttered oath seemed to hang about the small kitchen. The basin emptied, set in the sink and filled with water, Geordie's next move was towards a barrel standing in one corner of the room. Drawing a brass key from the pocket of his leathern waistcoat, he filled the blue jug to the brim with foaming beer. Raising the jug to his lips, he opened his mouth to take a huge draught, first blowing off the froth and scattering it in a shower of iridescent bubbles. But before the fragrant liquor touched his lips the frown on his brow relaxed and a light seemed to break upon him. The jug was set down on the table with its contents untouched. The light broadened, the thin lips relaxed, the blue eyes shone with suppressed merriment.

'— my soul and body,' he cried ecstatically.

With which reprehensible exclamation he brought his heavy right hand down upon his thigh with an echoing crack that would have made another man's leg ache for a week after.

'That's it,' he shouted, 'that 'ill fetch 'em. Blame 'em, they won't forget it in a hurry. Ha! ha! ha! I see 'em now.' His loud laugh made the four walls ring again.

Twice he attempted to drink, and twice the secret joke proved too much for him, and the jug had to be set down untasted. The third time he succeeded, and poured in the beer—it would not be correct to say he drank it—without pausing once.

His usual pipe followed, but ever and anon the hidden thought would come between him and his smoke, causing him to emit peculiar sounds, compounded of grunts, laughs, and coughs.

Next morning, as soon as the rules of the institution allowed, Geordie was at the hospital, once more anxiously awaiting the doctor. The old man was dressed as on the previous day—lathern waistcoat, greasy cap, iron-stained mole-skins. Sundays and week-days were all the same to him. Geordie never attended any place of worship: he was a stranger to all churches. He would not have found their atmosphere congenial, unless, perhaps, he had been allowed to sit in some belfry-tower whilst the bells were clanging their loudest. Then he would have been perfectly and peacefully happy, surrounded by hideous noises and cold black metal. He stood in front of the fire in the doctor's room as stiff and stolid as a newly founded casting.

As the doctor had said, it was a simple matter enough to amputate Tommy's maimed hand. In fact, within an hour after his admission to the noble building, Tommy was lying on his cot in No. 2 Ward, his stumpy forearm bound up, and made comfortable for the night. He himself was cleaner than ever he had been in his life before, and stretched between snow-white sheets. A snow-white pillow also supported the aching, throbbing head, which tossed from side to side in raging fever.

Very anxious was the doctor that night, but towards dawn the nurses observed an improvement; and when the doctor made his rounds at breakfast-time he found the danger, though not entirely absent, still much lessened. By the time Geordie put in an appearance, that is, at ten o'clock, professionally speaking Tommy was all right.

'Well, Donce,' the doctor said cheerily as he entered his room, 'I think he'll do.'

'Does that mean he'll pull through, Mester?' Geordie queried eagerly.

'Yes, he's quite safe. The arm is going on well, and the fever has almost left him.'

Geordie was silent, his features working strangely. Then he turned away, saying:

'Yow keep yowr rooms too hot, doctor, making a motion to wipe perspiration from his brow. But, curiously enough, the perspiration seemed to have gathered in his eyes.

'You're a kind-hearted fellow, Donce,' the doctor said, with a sharp look. Then, with quick tact, continued:

'Tell me how the accident happened.'

'Gammon, gammon,' muttered Geordie, in allusion to the doctor's first observation. But before he could reply to his question, he had to spit violently into the fire and make two or three big efforts to swallow something that had hopped up in his throat and stuck there.

'It happened this how,' he burst out, when he felt master of himself. Then he gave the doctor a true and full account of the whole affair. For respectability's sake we must repress the frequent oaths he introduced into the recital; they were but indications of the depths to which a strong nature had been moved, mere heavings of an ocean of love seldom disturbed.

'The brutal hounds,' exclaimed the doctor, when Geordie had done. 'What's going to be done to them? They deserve penal servitude for life.'

'No, no,' laughed Geordie, 'that 'ud never

do. They wouldn't care for pinnel servitude, bless ye. W'm goin' to judge 'em ourselves. And,' he went on with a chuckle, 'I reckon our verdict 'll be one theys goin' to remember.'

'Well, I hope so, Donce; they richly deserve to suffer. However, I must bid you good-morning. My patients will be requiring me.'

'Mornin', Mester,' replied Geordie, turning to go.

'Say,' he said, stopping on his way to the door, 'mappen yo' couldn' let me 'ave a luk at 'e,' pointing with his thumb in the direction in which he supposed Tommy's ward to lie.

'Certainly,' the obliging doctor replied, 'come along.'

So together the strangely matched pair passed out into the large entrance hall and up the broad staircase. They offered a curious contrast. The dapper little doctor, treading almost as lightly as a bird; his beard neatly trimmed, spotless attire, and bright looks. At his side the huge, heavily built iron-man, lifting each foot as if it weighed a ton, dressed in a skin waistcoat with bits of fur still sticking to it here and there; his head still covered, for Geordie was far too independent to remove his cap for any one. Stepping as a young elephant might be expected to, he followed the doctor into No. 2 ward, and planted his heavy person by the side of Tommy's cot.

Tommy was sleeping quietly, with one bright spot on each cheek, his bound-up arm lying outside the sheets. As the old man gazed at his little friend, a strangely soft look crept across his rugged, hard-lined face. He bent down to listen to his gentle breathing.

'God bless yo' fur a brave lad,' he whispered, as he turned to follow the doctor to the door.

There he was dismissed, and forged his way down-stairs alone, as silently as he could. Crossing the hall again, his attention was attracted by a box standing near the door. It looked like a letter-box, only the slit was too small. It had also some words painted on it, but reading was not easy to Geordie.

'What's that thing fur?' he queried of a neatly attired nurse, who crossed the hall at that moment.

'That is for visitors' contributions,' the nurse answered, with a smile.

'Visitors' contributions; well, I'm a visitor. But what's contributions?'

'Money given by those who come here to see their friends,' she explained, much amused.

'Oh,' said Geordie, 'you'll be meanin' brass.'

Therewith he dived into his right hand trousers' pocket and brought up a miscellaneous collection of sovereigns and half-sovereigns, silver, coppers, nails, string, shreds of tobacco, and what not.

With the useful thumb and remaining finger of his left hand he dropped in first one golden coin and then another, then a third, each falling with a happy clink to the bottom of the box.

'I reckon that'll put it reet,' he remarked, as he turned away, leaving the nurse petrified with astonishment at the strange apparition. Having discharged this duty and so eased his mind, he wended his heavy way back to his home.



The rest of this memorable Sunday was spent by Geordie, for the most part, in the exercise of some peculiar gymnastic feats, of which more anon. One of his acts, however, must be mentioned here. So impressed had he been with the painful cleanliness of everything connected with the hospital and its inmates that he felt it absolutely necessary to make some attempt at 'weshing' himself, if he carried out his intention of visiting Tommy as often as he was allowed to do so.

Therefore he set to work that afternoon and used soap and water for the first time for many years. True, the resulting improvement was only partial, and his heart only half in the work of reform. As he explained, in an apologetic way to his surprised niece that evening, 'he couldn' abide the mucky stuff,' meaning the soap, 'and on'y did it for that little nipper's sake.' However it had this good effect: whilst Tommy lay in hospital, Geordie visited him every Sunday; and so sure as he was found, at three o'clock, with his queer attire, mounting the steps leading to the hospital door, so would he have been found, two hours earlier, making a brave effort to cleanse face and hands, using the brown basin from which he had eaten his dinner a few minutes previously.

#### SPECTACLES.

NONE of the five senses with which we are endowed is more precious than sight, nor is there one more liable to deterioration with both young and old, defects in it developing more rapidly, and at an earlier period, than in our faculties of hearing, smell, touch, or taste. With the right use of our eyes, we have an enviable amount of independence, in contrast to those afflicted with visual defects, and a capacity for enjoying all that makes life beautiful and desirable. We need be neither a burden to our friends nor a weariness to ourselves. Partial or total blindness is a contingency that may come to all; yet the neglect of little troubles to our eyes is notorious, and the commonest care to preserve them to the utmost, is quite the exception. At the first sign of any bodily ailment we seek remedies, but too often defer a consultation with an oculist until irreparable mischief has been caused by delay. Clever oculists and skilful opticians have brought to great perfection remedies and appliances for defective sight, which were totally unknown to former generations.

Of these, spectacles are the most familiar to us, though it does not appear that the ancients used them at all. Italy, the country to which we owe so much in the arts and sciences, claims the invention, but authorities differ about the name of the inventor, and also in the date of their introduction, somewhere at the close of the 13th century. Jourdan de Rivalto, who died at Pisa 1311, stated in one of his sermons, 'that it is not twenty years since the art of making spectacles was found out, which is indeed,' he adds, 'one of the best and most necessary inventions in the world.' At Pisa also, preserved in the Convent of Santa Caterina, are chronicles dated 1280, wherein we find that Alessandro de Spina, a friar of the order of the

Predicanti, on hearing 'that another than himself knew of it,' first communicated the result of his own invention of spectacles. This 'other' may possibly have been Salvino degli Armati, a Florentine noble, who, dying 1317, has inscribed on his tomb, that he was the first to invent spectacles. But there are traces of spectacles in the writings of the eleventh-century Arab author Alhazen. And Friar Roger Bacon, who ended his days 1294, describes a pair thus: 'This instrument, a plano-convex glass, or large segment of a sphere, is useful to old men, for they may see the smallest letters infinitely magnified.' It was only learned men and monks in those early days who required those 'segments of a sphere' to read their precious manuscripts and to illuminate their beautiful missals. Now every one reads, and new theories so upset old traditions, that even the Venerable Motto of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers, 'A Boon to the Aged,' is no longer correct. Glasses are now an equal boon to the young, as to the old, and infants of tender years are getting as habituated to wearing them, as their elders are to seeing them on their little noses, a preventive as much as a curative measure for defects to which young people are specially liable, but which until recently, left unchecked, were a source of discomfort and of lasting disfigurement.

In the joyous age of inconsequent youth, we are said to view the world through 'rose-coloured spectacles.' But the time arrives all too soon, when these enchanted aids to happiness are dim, useless, and unserviceable, just like our real eyes, when we have unwillingly to acknowledge 'we do not see as well as we did.' The laws of natural decay are immutable, and every portion of our complex bodies—including our eyes—undergoes certain changes as years creep on. All our nerves are differentiated, each with its own special mission to fulfil. The auditive nerve responds to infinitely delicate vibrations of sound, which have no effect whatever on the optic nerves, whose peculiar work is to transmit, by fine vibrations, impressions into the back of the brain, by means of which medium alone we see. After the age of forty or forty-five, the lenses of the eye become more or less flattened, and the result is a decrease of the refractive power, and a sensible diminution in the acuteness of vision. This well-known failing betrays itself when the things we are looking at require to be held at an ever-increasing distance, before they become sharp and clear. The lessened transparency in the media of the eye is a gradual but marked process, and from it oculists can form a fairly correct idea of the age of a patient. When keenness of vision is lessened, even in a small degree, an oculist—not an optician—should be consulted without delay, who will advise the right kind and proper strength of spectacles suited to the case.

If we think of the construction of the eye, its delicate tissues and sensitive lenses, we will readily understand that none but those who have made the difficult science of optics their study, is fitted to treat its defects and diseases. The standard of vision is not invariable, it is relative, rather than absolute; the eyes of no two people are alike, and even the two eyes of

an individual frequently differ materially. It is clear, then, that many different glasses are required to suit all visions; for if unduly strained by unsuitable lenses, the sight is apt to give out long before it should, had proper precautions been adopted. The three primary properties of lenses are to modify the inclination of the luminous rays of light at their incidence upon the cornea; to modify the quantity of light; and to modify colour. A great variety is in use, both for scientific purposes and for spectacles. For the latter we have the non-focal coloured glasses, the plano-convex, the plano-concave, the double convex, and double concave, and the double focus or Franklin lens, that appears cracked across the centre, but is in reality two pair of lenses in one frame, to suit eyes of different focus—no uncommon occurrence, though often unsuspected, and therefore not attended to as it should. The oculist has every form of lens at his command, for the various kinds of defective vision, the commonest of which are 'astigmatism' or irregular sight—'myopia' or short sight, and 'Presbyopia,' old or long sight. This last with the aged arises from rigidity, but many young people are liable to the trouble. The lenses for spectacles are made usually from crown-glass, the cheapest of any; but convex glasses, which from their shape are peculiarly liable to injury from scratches, are nearly always constructed from either rock-crystal or flint-glass, both extremely hard substances, possessing, besides, superior dispersive powers over other material. The cheaper kind of spectacles sent over in quantities from Germany and elsewhere, are seldom free from blemishes, and as the slightest flaw in a lens is injurious to the eye, care should be taken not to use any that have tiny air-bubbles or minute specks on their surface.

Like everything else in this progressive age, spectacles have been rapidly perfected, not only in the quality of the lenses, but more especially in their mounting. The heavy framework of bone, horn, and tortoise-shell, worn by our grandfathers, are a contrast indeed to the dainty light setting of modern glasses, the aim of the good spectacle maker of to-day. A frame of the slightest fine steel, or the lightest of gold, compatible with the safe holding of the lens, makes the wearing of glasses much less irksome than they must formerly have been. Pince-nez have frequently no setting at all beyond the necessary bridge; and the heavy double gold eyeglass, once such a favourite with young-old belles and antique beaux at Spas and fashionable watering-places, is now quite obsolete. Another craze too is gone, when every one who wished to be thought smart, was bound to carry an eyeglass, in order that they might properly recognise friends, and effectually avoid detriments. There is a survival of this fashion on the Continent, in the constant use of the long-handled lorgnette.

When the advisability of wearing spectacles is once granted, care should be taken, not only to procure lenses that suit, but also to have comfortably fitting frames. The bridges of our noses on which they rest, we all know, vary in width, and the distance between the eyes is

seldom the same in two individuals. Attention ought to be paid to this fact; for if spectacles are improperly adjusted, the focus is imperfect, causing the eyes to ache, and instead of assisting us to see better, the fault may aggravate disease, if it exists, or even induce it. The apathy shown by people about their eyes is difficult of logical explanation. We see glasses with crooked frames, and lenses quite dull with constant use; and hear the wearers of them complaining of failing sight and increasing inconvenience, all through neglect of the simple precaution of a periodical examination by a skilled oculist. Not to use this precaution is a source of absolute danger where men are employed in any public capacity. The primary cause of many a collision at sea and accident on railways is doubtless often due to defective eyesight of the lookout man in the one case, and of the signal-man on the other.

The first fruits of the slow growth of optical science was not spectacles, but the single microscope, in the form of a glass globe filled with water. The next known magnifying lens is one of rock-crystal—now in the British Museum—found by Layard in the Palace of Nimrod. But it was not until three centuries after spectacles had been introduced, that the first compound microscope was made in 1590 by Zacharias Jansz or Janssen, or by his father, Hans Jansz, spectacle makers and natives of Middleburg, a town about four miles from Flushing. A Jansz microscope was in the possession of Cornelius Drebbel, of Alkmaar, when staying in London, as Mathematician at the Court of James VI., but this primitive effort cannot compare with the perfect modern instrument that has revealed to us a world of infinite minuteness, not less wonderful than the knowledge obtained with the aid of the telescope of the infinitely remote heavens. Practically, the invention of spectacles led to the making of the telescope; for although astronomy was the earliest science cultivated by the ancients, they do not appear to have had instruments, but obtained their knowledge of the phenomena of heavenly bodies by constant, direct observation and close study. If Galileo did not actually originate the telescope—as some claim for him—he at least perfected it sufficiently to take observations which upset the erroneous theories held by wise men for ages, and to establish a more reasonable basis of study for the future benefit of scholars.

It is said that Galileo, when residing at Padua, where he was Professor of Mathematics at that university, one day went to Venice, where he heard that a Dutch spectacle maker, called Metius, was exhibiting to the Venetians a combination of lenses by which distant objects could be seen comparatively clearly. The great experimental philosopher, refusing either to look at or examine this marvel, returned home to puzzle out the hint he had received. The instrument known as 'Galileo's Tube' was completed the following year, 1609, and later, his perfected double-eyed telescope was given to the world. The sad sequel of his efforts in the cause of science is well known—how he was cited by the church for spreading heretical doctrines contrary to the direct evi-

dence of Scripture, was afterwards imprisoned, and on his release, banished from his native Florence for many years. Then came blindness, and Galileo, a broken and disappointed man, passed away in his seventy-eighth year, in his battlemented, strong, old tower, which still stands boldly out against the blue Italian sky, on the crest of a hill overlooking the lovely Tuscan vale of Arcetri.

## ROMANTIC TALES OF THE INDIAN WAR.

AN UNPUBLISHED INCIDENT OF THE SACK OF  
LUCKNOW.

By W. FORBES MITCHELL,  
Author of *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny*.

JUST after the Mutiny of 1857-58, some meddling philanthropists in England tried to get up an agitation about the wanton cruelty of our Army in India. They entirely overlooked the nature of the war and the fact that we were engaged in putting down mutiny and rebellion, and in punishing the murderers of helpless women and children; and omitted to reflect that until after the fall of Lucknow, the enemy—wherever met—far outnumbered the British, rendering it morally impossible to guard prisoners even if they had been taken. It was also forgotten that the revolted Sepoys had proclaimed the war of extermination, not the British; and no apologist of the mutineers can honestly assert that they were actuated by patriotism to cast off the yoke of the oppressor. As regards cases of wanton cruelty said to have been perpetrated by Sikhs or Goorkhas during the sack of either Delhi or Lucknow, it must be fully recognised that the greater part of the native army on our side consisted of newly raised levies from the wildest districts of the Punjab, and the Hills of Nepaul. Many of those in the ranks of the Punjabi regiments, and most of the native officers, were old men who had fought against the British during the wars preceding the annexation of the Punjab, and who had in 1857 actually taken service with the British in the hope of plunder and to pay off old outstanding grudges against the revolted Sepoys. They above all men looked upon mercy shown to a fallen enemy as the height of imbecile weakness.

I well recall the disgust and disapprobation of an old Sikh Sirdar (a native commander of a troop or squadron of cavalry) in the Umbeyla Pass campaign of 1863, seven years after the mutiny, because a picket of the enemy, which were surprised in the defiles and taken prisoners, were merely disarmed and sent to the rear. I asked the old man what he would have done with them. He replied, 'You Anzeze (English) are far too lenient; you don't know the ingratitude of these people. I remember on my first expedition into these hills, in Runjeet Singh's time, we surprised a picket just about this very place. We flayed every man of them alive, and tied them on ant-hills to be eaten alive by the ants. That is the proper way to deal with those people.' And when I asked him how he would appreciate such treatment himself, he replied: 'If we were to fall into the hands

of these scoundrels they would treat us far worse if they had time; they would impale us alive on a sharp stake, with hands and feet tied, and keep us there until the jackal by night, and the vultures by day, would in pure mercy come to put an end to our sufferings.' Such were the men composing the newly raised levies of 1857, who in most instances had to be controlled by only *one*, or at most *two*, European officers per battalion. Can it therefore be wondered at if there were some cases of wanton outrage? The only wonder is that there were not more. But as to cases of real wanton cruelty or outrage committed by European soldiers, none came under my own notice; and during the sack of Lucknow, I only heard of one well-authenticated case of wanton barbarism committed by a European officer. He was the son of a captain who had been in the service of the late king of Lucknow, and knew very little about European or Christian refinement, having been born and educated in Lucknow, and later on presented with a cadetship by Lord Dalhousie, in recognition of the services of his father at the time of the annexation of Oude.

But to my story. In pages 342 and 348 of the first edition of *My Diary in India*, Dr (now Sir W. H.) Russell, special correspondent to the *Times*, notices the outrage, but not its sequel and punishment. This may not have been exactly legal, according to the Queen's regulations and the articles of war, and was consequently known only to a few. In describing a run through the captured positions, Russell writes: 'I came upon the'—(I need not name the regiment). 'They are a fine set of fellows, but there is one among them who did a bloody, a cruel and cowardly act this day; but I am glad to know his comrades feel towards him as he deserves. After the Fusiliers had stormed the gateway, a Cashmere boy came to them, leading a blind and aged man, and throwing himself at the feet of this officer, asked for protection. The officer, as I was informed by his comrades, drew his revolver and snapped it at the wretched suppliant's head. The men of the regiment called shame on him. Twice again he pulled the trigger, and the weapon still refused to act, so thrice had he time to relent. The fourth time the gallant officer succeeded, and the boy's life-blood flowed at his feet, amidst the indignation and the outcry of his men.'

Such is Russell's account, which is exactly what was reported in the camp and told to me by men who were eye-witnesses to the barbarity. Now for the sequel, which I witnessed myself. After the capture of the Begum's Palace, my regiment, the 93d Highlanders, was allowed a few days' rest in camp, but returned to the city on the 18th March. By that time every effort was being made to put a stop to plundering and to restore order. General Sir Hope Grant himself, with a squadron of his cavalry brigade, patrolled part of the city and the roads, leading from the camp and the gardens alongside the Gumti, to put a stop to marauding. My company of the 93d was posted in a large house and garden near the Mint. Shortly after we had been posted, the General rode into the garden and called on Captain Dawson for a

guard of about a dozen men, and a drummer with his cat, to go and secure a party of marauders, who were plundering in a close or blind alley near by. I, with a dozen men, and drummer MacLeod, was at once detailed for the duty, and went with the General. After going round several turnings, we came on a party of about a dozen men, a sergeant, and an officer of the — Fusiliers, the same officer who had shot the Cashmere boy two days before, as described by Russell. They were all arrested and shut into a small court, the entrance to which, a narrow *cul de sac*, was guarded by a party of the 9th Lancers. Sir Hope Grant dismounted, leaving his charger with the mounted men in the street. Taking the guard of the 93d inside the courtyard, we were joined by Sergeant Peter Gillespie, our deputy provost-marshal, with a set of triangles and an unusually formidable 'cat-o'-nine-tails.' Sir Hope Grant ordered the whole of the marauders to fall in with the officer on the right, whilst Sergeant Gillespie fixed the triangles in the centre of the court. As soon as these arrangements were completed, the General, addressing the officer, asked him if he had not heard the Commander-in-chief's orders against marauding and plundering, and whether he knew that those caught in the act, no matter what their rank, were to be summarily flogged by the provost-marshal and returned to their regiments. Declaring that, having himself caught the party red-handed, he meant to do his duty, and flog every one of them, he then ordered the officer to strip. The latter remonstrated, but Sir Hope Grant replied, 'Come, come, sir! no nonsense: strip and take your punishment like a man; otherwise I must order these Highlanders to lay hands on you and forcibly tie you up. We have no time to waste for general courts-martial upon men like you; so strip at once.' The officer saw that there was no escape, and most reluctantly stripped, threatening Sir Hope Grant with a report to the Horse Guards, damages in a civil court, &c. But all his threats produced no effect; Sergeant Peter Gillespie strapped him firmly on to the triangles, then throwing off his coat to enable him to wield the cat with more effect, called out, 'Ready, Sir Hope!' The General gave the command, 'Lay on,' and counting the lashes himself, Peter laid on—up to twenty-five, which the officer stood with a good deal of wriggling, but up to then he did not howl outright. When he completed twenty-five lashes, Peter stopped, and saluting the General, said, 'My arm is tired, Sir Hope: drummer MacLeod is left-handed; let him give the remainder.'—'All right, all right,' said Sir Hope. 'Certainly! certainly! let drummer MacLeod finish the job!'

Non-military readers who have never seen a man flogged may not see the force of the change from a right-handed to a left-handed operator with the cat, so I must explain. The lashes given with the left hand cut diagonally across those already laid on with the right hand, making a St Andrew's cross, multiplied by nine at every stroke on the back of the patient, and the pain of a cross-flogging is excruciating. The halt had allowed the strokes already administered to swell, and the blood was flowing

freely, for the cat had been purposely prepared, as a punishment for the shooting of the little boy, as described by Russell. So drummer MacLeod assumed the cat in his left hand and flogged with a will; and at the second or third stroke the officer commenced to howl, but this had no effect. Sergeant Gillespie counted the lashes, and Sir Hope Grant stood in front of the triangles, calling out: 'Now, now, don't howl and disgrace your regiment; take it like a man! take it like a man!' When he had got his fifty, Sir Hope said: 'Now on with your clothes, and off to your regiment, and if you don't say anything about this yourself, no one else will; be off, and don't plunder any more, lest a worse thing befall you.'

The officer dressed and disappeared as sharply as he could, Sergeant Gillespie saying stingingly to him, 'You're not so brave on the triangles as when shooting little boys.' As soon as he was gone, Sir Hope Grant turned to the sergeant and the men, telling them that if they would each promise not to plunder any more, he would let them off, in consideration of the bad example which had been set them by an officer. This they all gladly promised, and were allowed to go. I afterwards learned from Sergeant Gillespie that the whole was a prearranged plan, the sergeant only being in the secret, as the officer in question was known to be an inveterate plunderer, and a cowardly cur. He shortly afterwards sent in his papers and retired from the service. He was eventually drowned in one of the Assam rivers by the upsetting of a boat.

#### THE COMMONPLACE.

SHALL we but value what is rare—  
The flawless gem, the peerless face—  
And none of our affection spare  
For what is only commonplace?

The gifts of God, like words, abound  
On ev'ry page of Nature's book:  
There's something worthy to be found  
Wherever you may chance to look.

We do rank common things before  
God's rarer wonders, now and then,  
As common bread is worth far more  
Than diamonds to hungry men.

And always in God's common things  
There's beauty, if we care to seek—  
The sober brown of sparrows' wings,  
The wrinkles on a furrowed cheek.

'Tis not perfection icy-cold,  
In earth beneath, or heav'n above,  
That can alone our heart-strings hold:  
Hearts cannot tell us why they love.

God help us all if men should care  
For only what is full of grace,  
Lest love itself should then be rare  
And we should still be commonplace!

C. J. BODEN.

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